

THE
DEFENDERS

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THE DEFENDERS™



BACK
MY FELLOW
DEFENDERS--

--CLEA MUST
NOT BE
STOPPED!

AND
IF THAT'S
NOT PROBLEM--
ENOUGH--
WHAT THE
HECK IS
HAPPENING
TO THE
HULK?!

BEANS, STRANGE!
SHE'S TURNIN' THE
SUN INTO A
FIREBALL!

D 9



The mysterious **DR. STRANGE!** The vibrant **VALKYRIE!** The high-flying **NIGHTHAWK!** The incredible **HULK!** Evil-doers **TREMBLE** at the names—for these four form the crux of the greatest **NON-TEAM** in history, heroes called together only when the need arises—to battle **MENACES** that threaten the security—or the very **LIFE!**—of the planet **EARTH!**

Stan Lee
PRESENTS: **THE DYNAMIC DEFENDERS!**

RIOT IN LELLBLOCK 12!

CLOISTERED IN A TINY GARRET OF HIS GREENWICH VILLAGE SANCTUM, DR. STRANGE KNEELS... AND THE HUNT BEGINS! THE PREY & SOME CLUE TO THE RECENT UNRELIABILITY OF HIS MAGIC.

THE LEERING FACES OF HIS ENEMIES TAUNT HIM FROM WORLDS UNSEEN. THEIR EVIL COULD TRIUMPH ON EARTH IF HIS QUARRY ELUDES HIM.

SO HE PROWS ON, DEEPER INTO THE MAZE OF HIS MIND, PAST THE VEIL OF THE UNCONSCIOUS, LEAVING MERE SENSORY REALITY EVER FARTHER BEHIND HIM.

STEVE GERBER • SCRIPT
SAL BUSCEMA • LAYOUTS
KLAUS JANSON • FINISHED ART
HIPPI WATANABE • LETTERERS
DON WARFIELD • COLORIST
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AND MEANWHILE, IN THE PARLOR...

HE'S BEEN
UP THERE
FOR
HOURS!

WHAT'S
HE
DOIN--
COUNTIN'
THE
NAILS
IN THE
FLOOR?

TRY TO CONTAIN YOUR
IMPATIENCE, MR. CAGE.
MYSTICAL DETECTIVE
WORK IS OFTEN A MOST
TEDIOUS UNDERTAKING.

WELL, SO IS WAITING
FOR THE RESULTS!
I FEEL LIKE AN
EXPECTANT
FATHER!

WE NEED SOME
ACTION
AROUND HERE!

CLEA--DEFENDERS
--MR. NORRISS
HAS ARRIVED.

HE APPEARS
TO BE QUITE
AGITATED.

SO YOU'RE HERE!
FOR CRYING OUT
LOUD... I'VE BEEN
PACING THE FLOOR
AT RICHMOND'S
PENTHOUSE!

WHY DIDN'T YOU
TELL ME...
ALL I KNEW,
YOU WERE ALL
DEAD!

SORRY ABOUT THAT,
JACK. WE'VE BEEN
BUSY-- BATTLING
BOZOS AND ALIEN
APES.

IT SLIPPED
OUR COLLECTIVE
CONSCIOUSNESS.

FUN-NEE! I-- WAITAMINIT--
WHERE'S VAL? WHERE'S MY
WIFE?

TANIA--
CAN I GET A
STRAIGHT
ANSWER
FROM
YOU?

I HAVE YET
TO MEET THIS
WARRIOR-WOMAN
VALKYRIE.
SHE IS STILL...
MISSING.

WHADDAYA MEAN--
"MISSING"? WHERE
DID SHE GO? THIS IS
THE FIRST I'VE
HEARD--

WE TOOK OFF
ON ANOTHER
OF YOUR SUPER-
HERO JOYRIDES
AND GOT
SEPARATED!
I HAVEN'T
SEEN HER
SINCE--

AWRIGHT, AWRIGHT--
COOL IT! SUPPOSE
YOU JUST TELL US
ALL ABOUT IT--

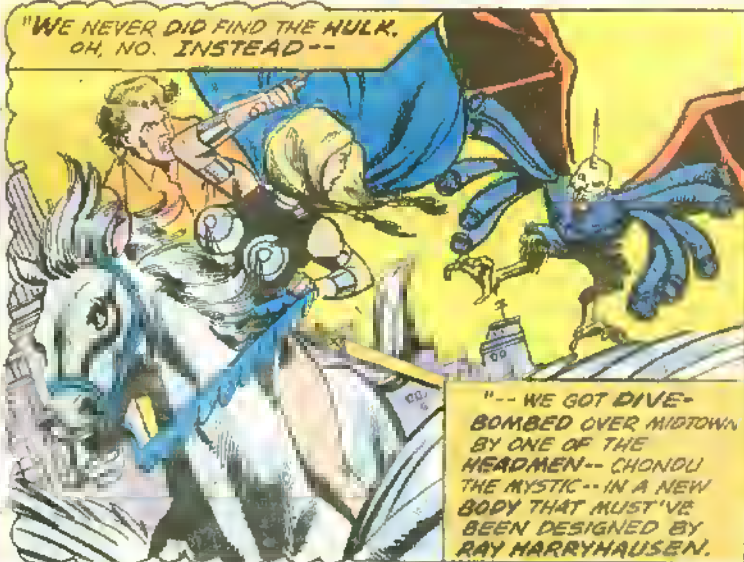
--NICE 'N'
CALM LIKE?

RIGHT, JUST
LIKE A BEDTIME
STORY, HUH?
OKAY...!

ONCE UPON A TIME... VAL AND I WENT OFF IN SEARCH OF A GREEN GIANT INTENDING TO KEEP HIM OUT OF TROUBLE WHILE DOC AND TANIA PUT NIGHTHAWK'S BRAIN BACK IN HIS HEAD.

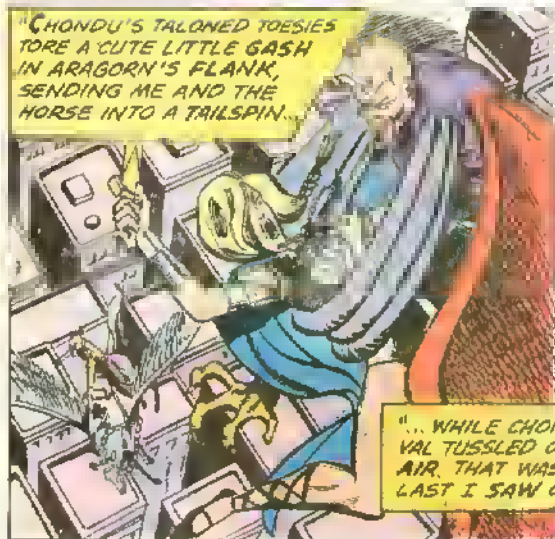


"WE NEVER DID FIND THE HULK. OH, NO. INSTEAD--"



"-- WE GOT DIVE-BOMBED OVER MIDTOWN BY ONE OF THE HEADMEN-- CHONDU THE MYSTIC-- IN A NEW BODY THAT MUST'VE BEEN DESIGNED BY RAY HARRYHAUSEN.

"CHONDU'S TALONED TOESIES TORE A CUTE LITTLE GASH IN ARAGORN'S FLANK, SENDING ME AND THE HORSE INTO A TAILSPIN...



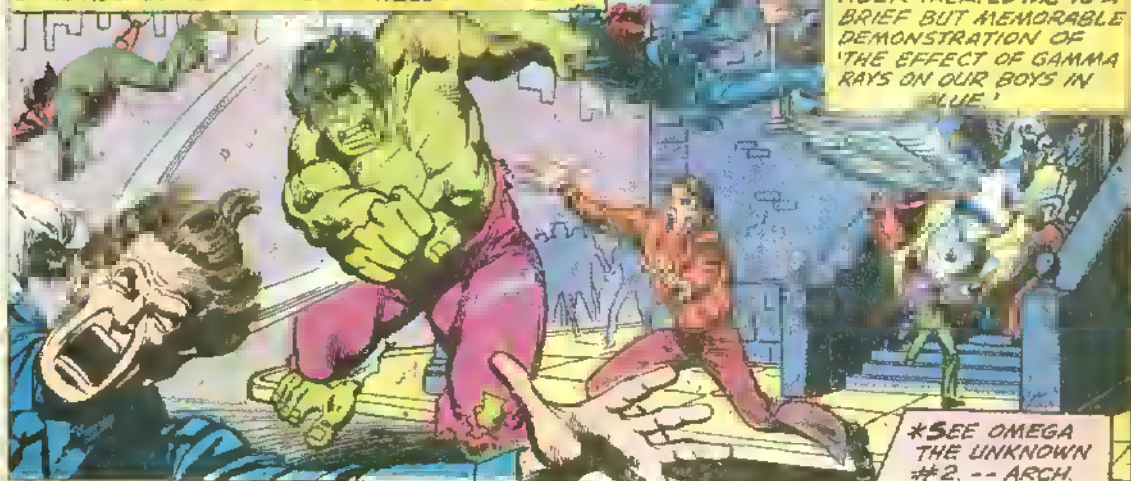
"... WHILE CHONDU AND VAL TUSSELED ON IN MID-AIR, THAT WAS THE LAST I SAW OF HER.

"AS IT DEVELOPED, THE HULK FOUND ME--"



"-- JUST IN TIME TO GIVE ARAGORN A LIFT TO THE ASPCA.

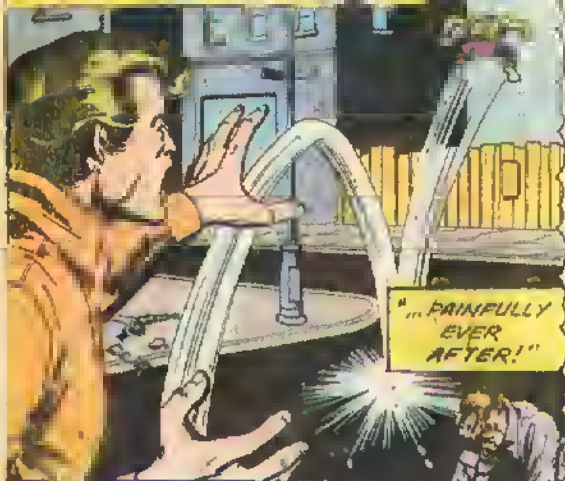
"LITTLE DID I SUSPECT THAT GREENSKIN ALREADY HAD THE COPS ON HIS TAIL... FOR SOME RUCKUS HE'D CAUSED IN HELL'S KITCHEN.*



"SO WHILE THE VETS TREATED ARAGORN, THE HULK TREATED ME TO A BRIEF BUT MEMORABLE DEMONSTRATION OF 'THE EFFECT OF GAMMA RAYS ON OUR BOYS IN BLUE.'"

*SEE OMEGA THE UNKNOWN #2. -- ARCH.

THEN, WITHOUT SO MUCH AS A FARE-
THEE-WELL, HE BOUNDED AWAY... AND
THE POLICE MOANED...



"...PAINFULLY
EVER
AFTER!"

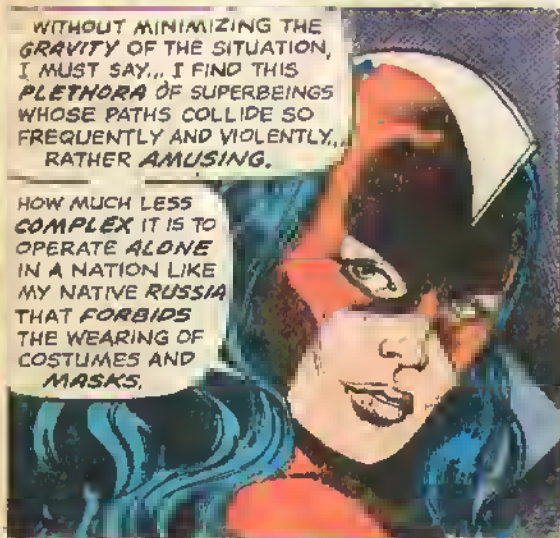
THE REST YOU KNOW, I
WAS OUT SCOUTING FOR
VAL WHEN I HEARD ABOUT
YOUR RUN-IN WITH PLANT-
MAN AND CALLED POWER
MAN HERE TO HELP ME
BAIL YOU OUT.

BUT ALL TOLD, IT'S
BEEN TWO DAYS
SINCE I'VE SEEN
HIDE OR HAIR
OF VAL!



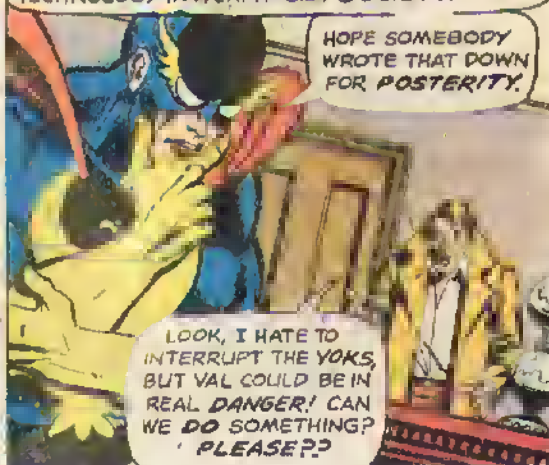
WITHOUT MINIMIZING THE
GRAVITY OF THE SITUATION,
I MUST SAY... I FIND THIS
PLETHORA OF SUPERBEINGS
WHOSE PATHS COLLIDE SO
FREQUENTLY AND VIOLENTLY...
RATHER AMUSING.

HOW MUCH LESS
COMPLEX IT IS TO
OPERATE ALONE
IN A NATION LIKE
MY NATIVE RUSSIA
THAT FORBIDS
THE WEARING OF
COSTUMES AND
MASKS.



MMM-HMMM, INDUBITABLY A CONSEQUENCE
OF THE WIDESPREAD AVAILABILITY OF ADVANCED
TECHNOLOGY IN A CAPITALIST SOCIETY.

HOPE SOMEBODY
WROTE THAT DOWN
FOR POSTERITY.

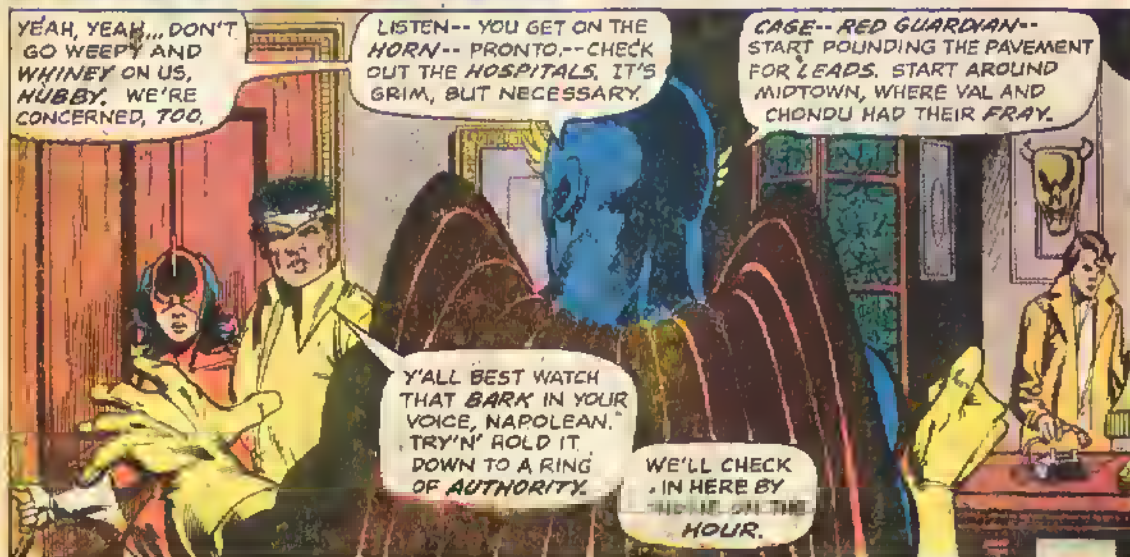


LOOK, I HATE TO
INTERRUPT THE YOKS,
BUT VAL COULD BE IN
REAL DANGER! CAN
WE DO SOMETHING?
PLEASE??

YEAH, YEAH... DON'T
GO WEEPY AND
WHINEY ON US,
HUBBY. WE'RE
CONCERNED, TOO.

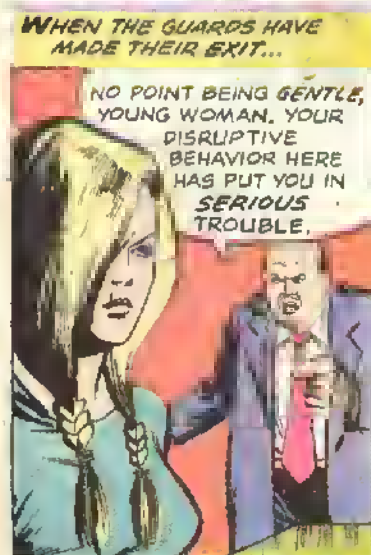
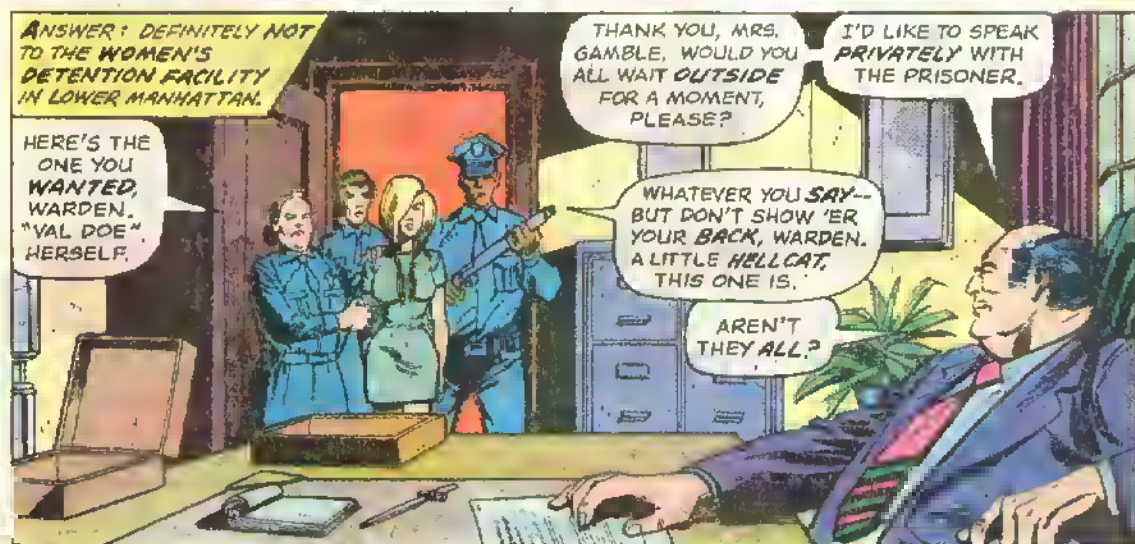
LISTEN-- YOU GET ON THE
HORN-- PRONTO-- CHECK
OUT THE HOSPITALS. IT'S
GRIM, BUT NECESSARY.

CAGE-- RED GUARDIAN--
START POUNDING THE PAVEMENT
FOR LEADS. START AROUND
MIDTOWN, WHERE VAL AND
CHONDU HAD THEIR FRAY.



Y'ALL BEST WATCH
THAT BARK IN YOUR
VOICE, NAPOLEAN.
TRY'N' HOLD IT
DOWN TO A RING
OF AUTHORITY.

WE'LL CHECK
IN HERE BY
THE HOUR.



NOW, LET'S DROP THAT ICY TONE, MY DEAR. I'M JUST TRYING TO HELP YOU.

YOU'RE YOUNG, PRETTY... THIS SEEMS TO BE YOUR FIRST OFFENSE. I'D HATE TO SEE SOME OF THE TOUGHER GALS MESS UP THAT FLAWLESS FACE.



IT'LL BE EASIER ON ALL CONCERNED IF YOU JUST PLAY BA-- *AWP*

I AM EMINENTLY CAPABLE OF PROTECTING MYSELF, SIR...



... AND THE NOTION OF INDULGING IN GAMES OF ANY SORT WITH YOU, FRANKLY, REPULSES ME.

NNNNGH



I SHALL RESPECT YOUR POSITION, BECAUSE AT PRESENT I HAVE NO CHOICE.

BUT FONDLE ME EVER AGAIN-- AND YOU SHALL LIKELY NOT LIVE TO REGRET IT.

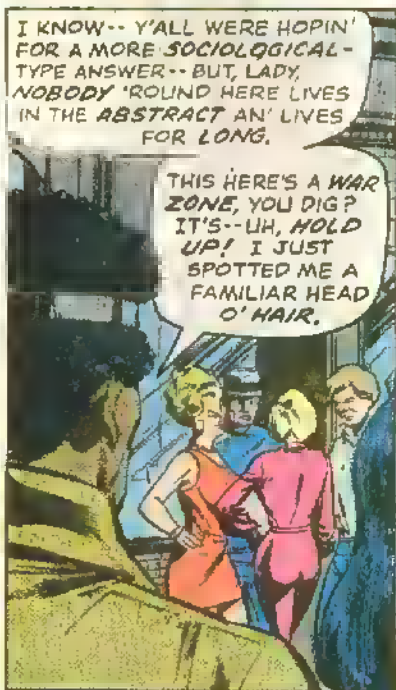
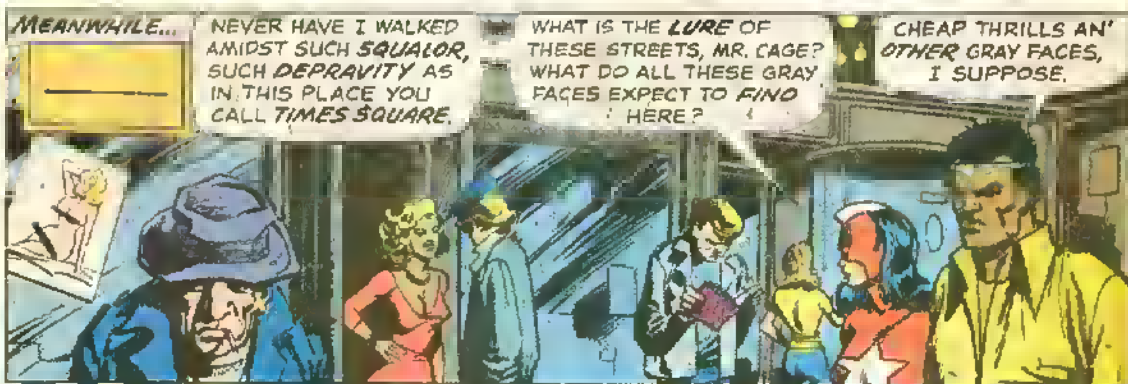
HOLY MOSES! WHA'--?

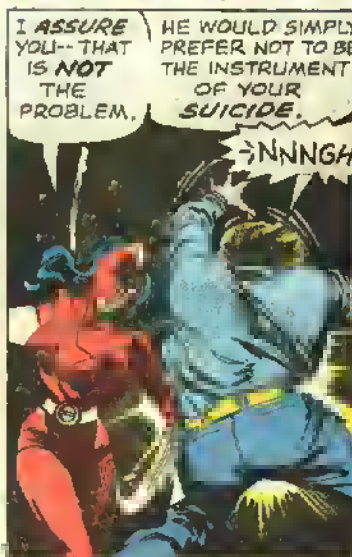
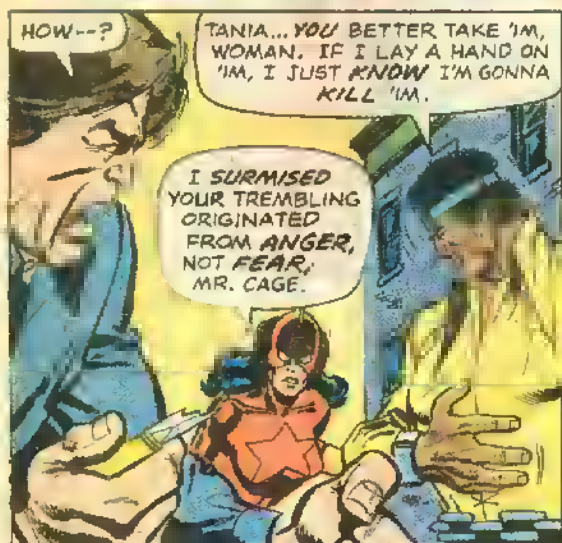


GRAB HER! I WANNA MAKE AN EXAMPLE OF THIS ONE!

TAKE 'ER BACK TO THE HIGH-POWER BLOCK--AND PUT HER TO WORK!









HEY, GIRLS-- GET A LOAD OF THIS! OUR OLD CELL MATE IS BACK--

-- WITH THE WARDEN AS HER ESCORT, NO LESS.

QUIET, IN THERE! IT DOESN'T CONCERN YOU!

ON YOUR KNEES, YOUNG WOMAN! I WANT THIS ENTIRE FLOOR SCRUBBED TO A SHINE!

SPEND ALL NIGHT AT IT IF NECESSARY

--BUT I WANT TO SEE IT SPOTLESS WHEN I RETURN AT EIGHT A. M.



THEN SCRUB IT YOURSELF-- SIR, I'VE DONE NO WRONG AND RATE NO PUNISHMENT.



CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP



I WON'T TOLERATE THIS INSUBORDINATION, YOUNG WOMAN!

--ESPECIALLY NOT IN VIEW OF THE OTHER PRISONERS!



GET DOW--

OOOWW



NOR SHALL I ABIDE YOUR TOUCH UPON ME-- SIR! I THOUGHT I'D MADE THAT CLEAR!

QUITE CLEAR! AND YOU'LL HAVE TIME TO PONDER ALL ITS IMPLICATIONS-- IN SOLITARY!

BOO!

HSSSS!

BOO!

TAKE HER AWAY!

SOLITARY, THE HOLE. A PERSON-SIZED BOX OF BLACKNESS AND SILENCE.



FOR MOST PRISONERS, IT IS TANTAMOUNT TO TORTURE.

FOR VAL, IT'S A VIRTUAL REPRIEVE... THE FIRST SEMBLANCE OF SECURITY SINCE HER JAILING.

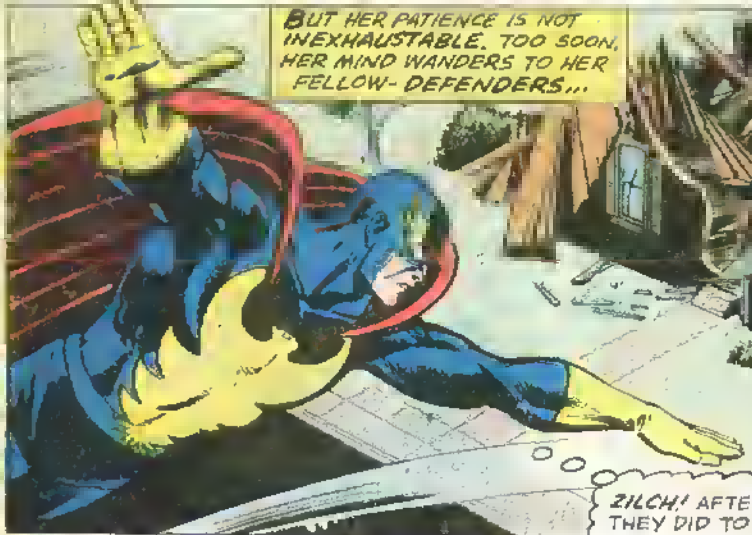


SHE'S NOT LOCKED IN... THEY'RE LOCKED OUT.

THEY! THE WOMEN AGAINST WHOM SHE IS MAGICALLY CONSTRAINED FROM EXERTING HER STRENGTH. SHE ACCEPTS HER SECLUSION GRATEFULLY.



BUT HER PATIENCE IS NOT INEXHAUSTIBLE. TOO SOON, HER MIND WANDERS TO HER FELLOW-DEFENDERS...



... TO THE FREEDOM GRANTED THEM BY ASTRAL BODIES, VERDANT MUSCLES... AND WINGS.

ZILCH! AFTER WHAT THEY DID TO ME...

... I FIGURED THERE MIGHT BE A CHANCE THE HEADMEN MADE OFF WITH VAL, TOO.

BUT THEIR HEAD-QUARTERS IS EXACTLY AS NORRIS DESCRIBED IT --



A SHAMBLES... AND UTTERLY DESERTED.

NO POINT HANGING AROUND AMONG THE RUINS. I'VE GOT ONE MORE POSSIBILITY IN MIND... AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE OF KYLE RICHMOND'S.



STILL... I WISH DOC HADN'T BEEN SO INSISTENT ABOUT THE INVIOABILITY OF MEDITATION.

IF THERE'S ONE THING WE COULD USE RIGHT NOW... IT'S A MAN WHO'S HANDY WITH A CRYSTAL BALL!"

THE FINAL INDIGNITY, EVEN HERE, WRETCHED REALITY ENCROACHES ON HER PERSONAL SPACE.

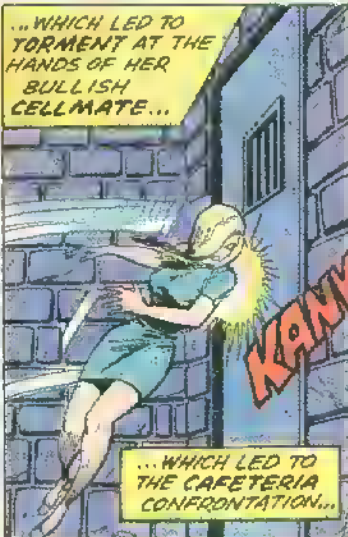
HER SOLEMN CONTEMPLATION DROWNS IN A FLOOD OF ANGRY MEMORIES...

THE BATTLE WITH CHONDU... WHICH LED TO THE WRECKING OF A POSH PENTHOUSE RESTAURANT...

... WHICH LED TO HER ARREST AND BOOKING... WHICH LED TO HER INCARCERATION...



... WHICH LED TO TORMENT AT THE HANDS OF HER BULLISH CELLMATE...



... WHICH LED TO THE CAFETERIA CONFRONTATION...

... WHICH LED TO THIS.



WELL, SHE CONCLUDES, ENOUGH...

... IS ENOUGH!!



I'VE ENDURED THE PETTY VYING FOR POWER, THE BLATANT UNINTEREST IN TRUTH, THE INANE ILLOGIC, AND...

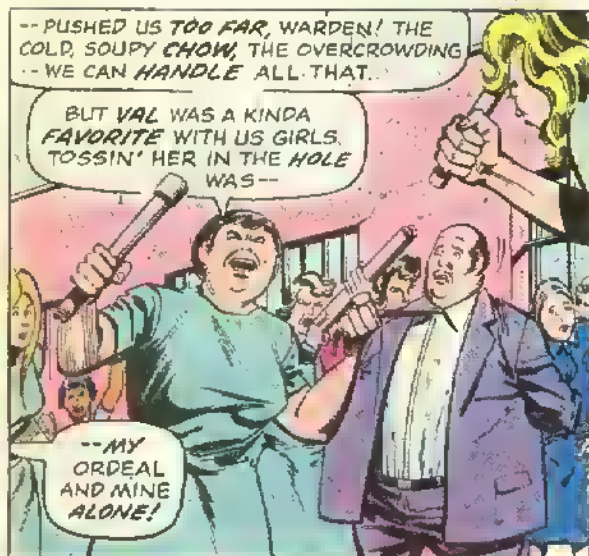
... NOW WHAT?! THE SOUNDS OF COMMOTION--!



HERE... BEYOND THIS DOOR... WHAT--?

DEMONS OF THE NORN-- NO!!





-- PUSHED US TOO FAR, WARDEN! THE
COLD, SOUPY CHOW, THE OVERCROWDING
-- WE CAN HANDLE ALL THAT.

BUT VAL WAS A KINDA
FAVORITE WITH US GIRLS.
TOSSIN' HER IN THE HOLE
WAS--

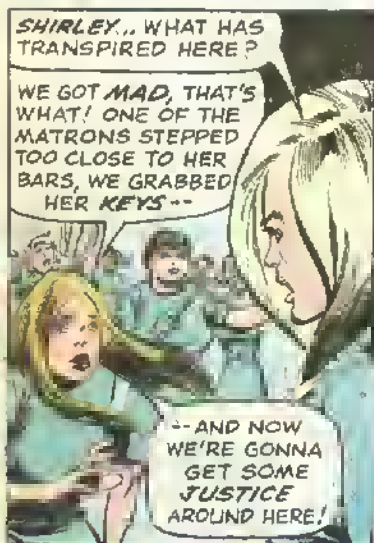
--MY
ORDEAL
AND MINE
ALONE!



I SHAN'T BE MADE A
CAUSE, BULLISH ONE--
AND MOST ESPECIALLY
NOT YOURS!

Y-YOU BEEN
SPRUNG! BUT
HOW-- WHO--?

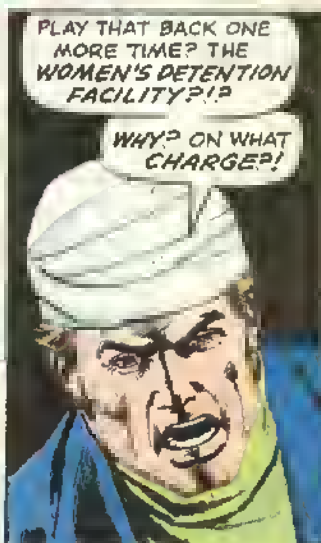
THAT, TOO, IS
EXCLUSIVELY
MY CONCERN.



SHIRLEY.. WHAT HAS
TRANSPIRED HERE?

WE GOT MAD, THAT'S
WHAT! ONE OF THE
MATRONS STEPPED
TOO CLOSE TO HER
BARS, WE GRABBED
HER KEYS--

--AND NOW
WE'RE GONNA
GET SOME
JUSTICE
AROUND HERE!



PLAY THAT BACK ONE
MORE TIME? THE
WOMEN'S DETENTION
FACILITY?!

WHY? ON WHAT
CHARGE?!



WHOLESALE DESTRUCTION OF
PROPERTY, THEY TELL ME...!

KYLE, I'M ONLY THE
POLICE COMMISSIONER
-- NOT THE WHOLE
FORCE! I CAN'T STAY
ON TOP OF EVERY
ARREST!



OF COURSE, IF
YOU'RE WILLING
TO POST BAIL, I
CAN HAVE HER
RELEASED IN
YOUR CUSTODY
ALMOST
IMMEDIATELY.

COME ON-- WE'LL HAIL
A TAXI, AND--

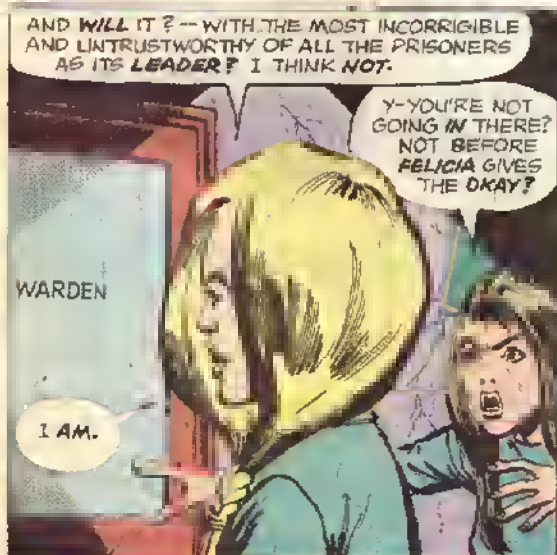
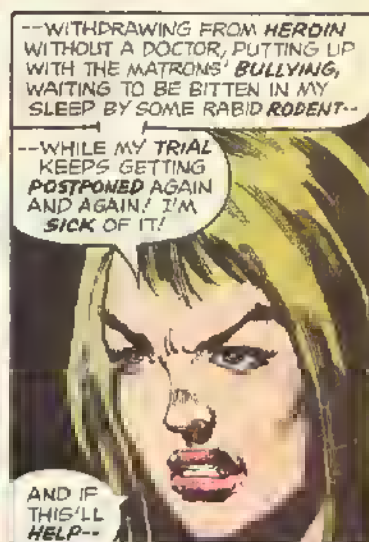
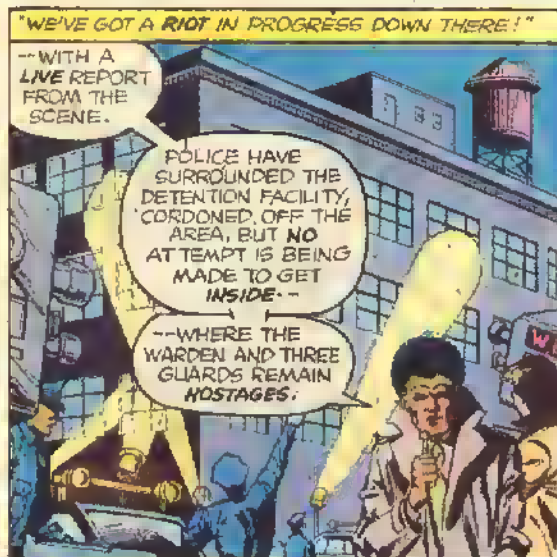
THE PHONE.
NATURALLY. BEAR
WITH ME JUST A
MOMENT.

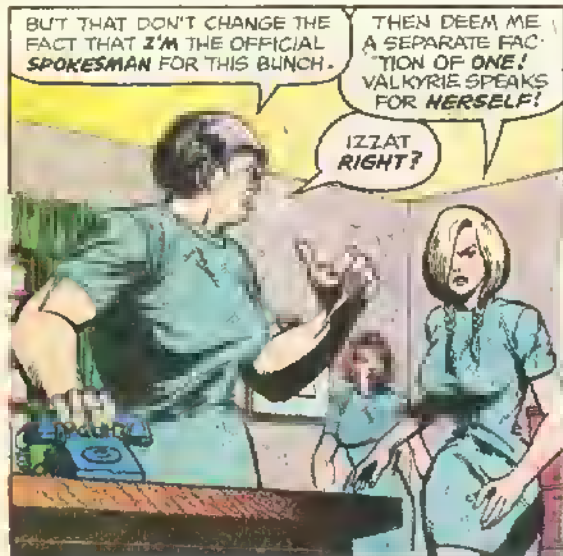


YES, THIS IS
FEINGOLD.
WHAT'S THE--

KYLE... THERE
MAY BE, EH, A
SLIGHT DELAY!

OH, NO...
YES...
RIGHT
GOOD-BYE.





BUT THAT DON'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT I'M THE OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN FOR THIS BUNCH.

THEN DEEM ME A SEPARATE FAC-
TION OF ONE!
VALKYRIE SPEAKS
FOR HERSELF!

IZZAT
RIGHT?



WELL, YOU CAN
JUST GO TALK TO
THE WALLS, SWEET-
CHEEKS, 'CAUSE
WHILE I'M IN
CHARGE--

YOU WILL FIND YOUR BRUT-
ISH BLOWS QUITE INEFFECT-
IVE AGAINST ME.

UHHMMPH?



I--I MUSTA
PULLED MY
PUNCH--I
DIDN'T WANNA
REALLY HURT
YA--

YOU STRUCK ME WITH ALL YOUR
STRENGTH--AND FAILED TO
BUDGE ME.

NOW PLEASE STAND
ASIDE. I WISH TO
CONTACT SOME
INFLUENTIAL
FRIENDS WHO--



YEAH,
FELICIA--
WHY BE
STUBBORN?
WHAT HARM
CAN ONE
CALL DO?

UNLESS THIS'S JUST AN EGO TRIP
FOR YOU? IS THAT IT?

DON'TCHA WANT NOBODY
STEALIN' YOUR THUNDER?



WHAT'RE YA?--A BUNCH
OF DOPES? HOW DO YOU
KNOW WHO SHE WANTS
TA CALL?

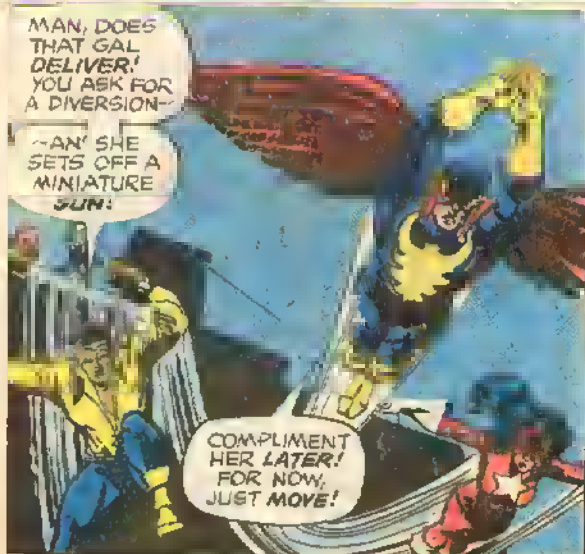
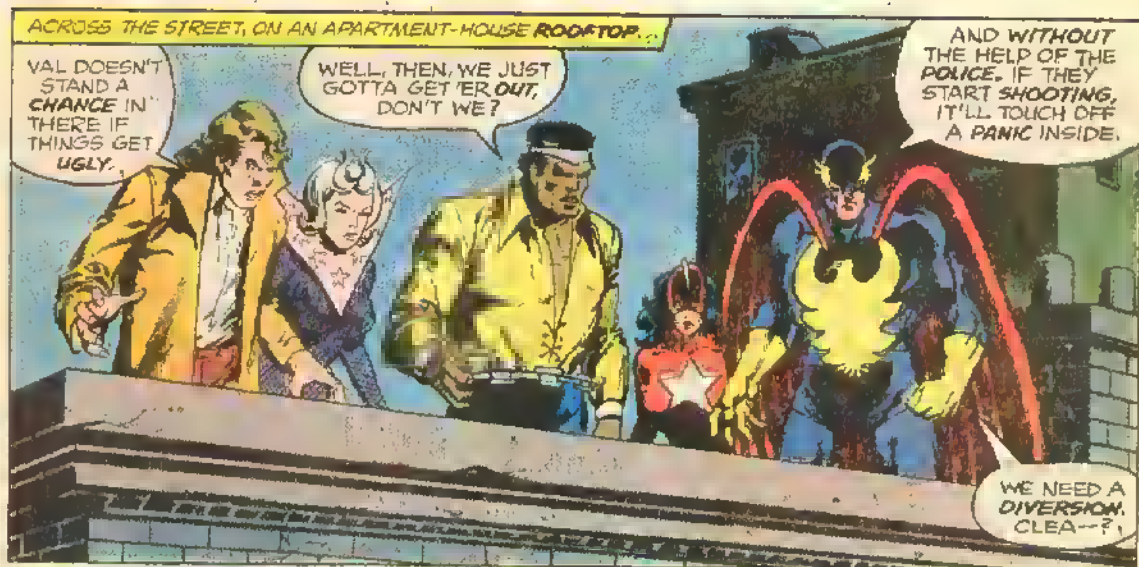
HOW DO WE
EVEN KNOW
SHE AIN'T A
FREAKIN'
PLANT?!

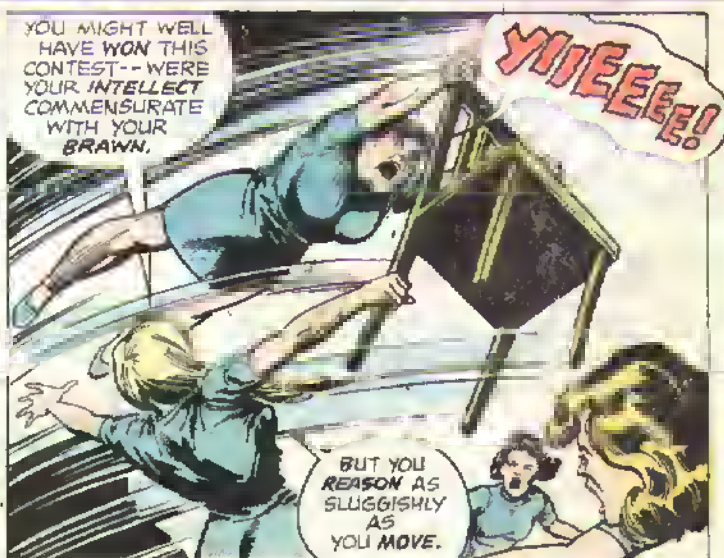
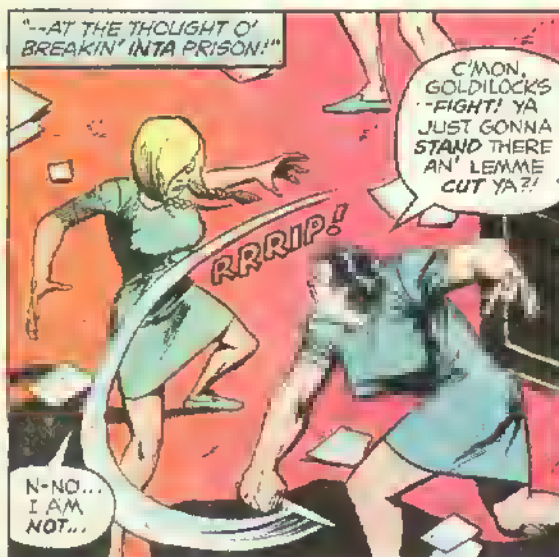
YA WANT HER
FOR YOUR LEADER
--SAY SO! G'WAN--
TAKE YER PICK--
HER OR ME!

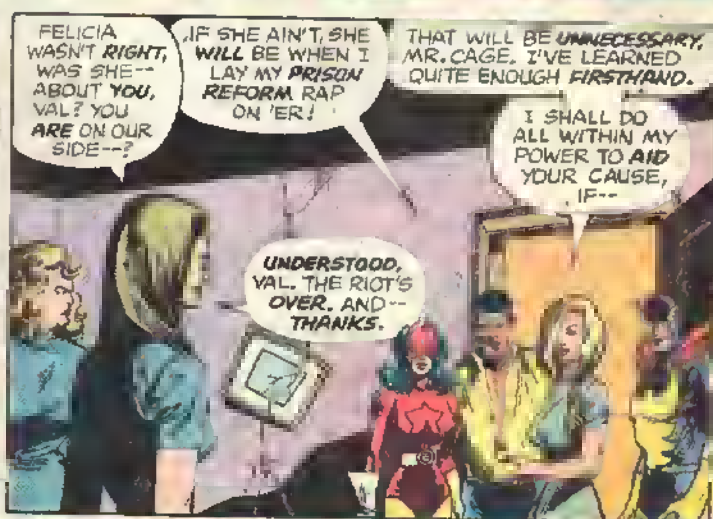
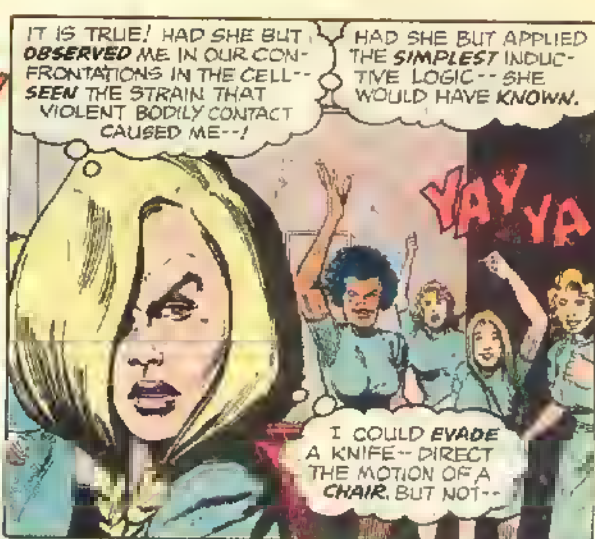


OR MAYBE I OUGHTTA JUST
ELIMINATE THE COMPETITION?

HOW 'BOUT IT,
SWEETCHEEKS--
FIGURE YOU CAN
TAKE ME?







NEXT / POLITICAL AND PRACTICAL JOKES-- THE HULK GOES TO THE MOVIES-- PLUS PRIDE, PREJUDICE, AND...

THE ASSASSIN WITH NO NAME!